Genesis, Chap. 45, Verse 24.

"See that ye fall not out by the way."

This was the parting advice, which Joseph gave to his brethren, after that affecting interview, in which he had been discovering to them--what long absence & the change in his appearance & condition had concealed--that he was their brother. He had been expressing his unalterable affection for them, by saying unto them, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. He had just fallen upon his brother Benjamin's neck, & been weeping over him. At the close of this interesting scene--while his heart was full of tenderness & the tears of affection & joy were flowing from his eyes,--when he was sending them away to his father with the news of his safety & prosperity, he knew not how to take his leave of them more [illegible] perhaps, or to give them a stronger [illegible]

his concern for their welfare, than by exhorting them to cultivate mutual harmony & love. He was sensible that this unexpected interview with a brother, whom they had so unkindly and inhumanly treated, would probably furnish them with no very pleasing reflections, on their way home. He justly apprehended, that each of them, to exculpate himself, as much as possible, from an action, of which, they were all, by this time, heartily ashamed, would be desirous of laying the blame upon his brother; & that this might, perhaps, become the occasion of hatred & contention. When, therefore, he parted from them, he thought the best advice, which, he could give them, was, "see that ye fall not out by the "way."

And, the same caution may, with the utmost propriety, be addressed to all those, who stand in a family relation to each other. It is their lot, to pursue the journey of life together; & it depends, in a great measure, upon themselves, whether it shall

be agreeable & pleasant, or uncomfortable & tiresome. An ungoverned violence, obstinancy, or petulance of temper, will beset their path, with innumerable thorns & briars; while a meek, contented & obliging disposition, will smooth their way, and spread perpetual sunshine round their steps. It, therefore, highly concerns them, to pay a serious & constant regard to the advice of the text. More particularly,

The importance of domestic peace and harmony will appear, if we consider how necessary it is, to the regular & chearful discharge of the relative duties.---Frequent animosities in families must, by degrees, weaken, if not entirely destroy, those benevolent affections, which are the foundation of all social virtue. How can those, who are continually at variance with each other, heartily & chearfully unite, in promoting their common interests, & contribute their several parts towards their mutual support & happiness? What delight or improvement can such families find, in social acts

of religious worship? Or, with what propriety can those, who have spent the day in angry debates, or in hateful sullenness, at the close of it, bow down together, before that Being, who is "the Author of peace and "lover of concord;" & pray that they may be adorned with that "meek & quiet spirit, "which is in the sight of God of great "price?" Can it be wondered at, if those, who are so unhappy as to live in the midst of the flames of contention, lose by degrees their concern for the happiness of their families, acquire an indolent & thoughtless turn of mind--abandon themselves to the pursuit of unlawful pleasures--& seek that peace & satisfaction, Abroad, which they find it impossible to enjoy, at Home? When a man meets with unprovoked resentment, peevishness & ill-nature, where he hoped for the warmest returns of esteem and love, he must either be totally void of sensibility, or be possessed of unusual greatness of mind, not to sink under, or cast off, his burden.

On the other hand, domestic harmony,

confirms & increases mutual affection, between the several members of a family, & hereby renders all the relative duties of life, easy & pleasant. Under the influence of this principle, each of them will chearfully exert himself, in his proper sphere, for the advantage of the little society, to which he belongs, & in which he enjoys the most substantial comfort & satisfaction. He will apply himself with diligence & alacrity to the business of his station, animated by the prospect of participating the fruits of his labour, with those for whom he entertains the highest affection. And he will readily perform the most difficult or laborious task in their service, supported by a sincere and tender concern for their welfare, & assured that he shall obtain--the only reward he desires--their gratitude & love.

The preservation of domestic peace is, moreover, of the utmost consequence, with regard to the younger branches of a family. When parents live in continual variance with each other, they will find themselves,

little disposed to pay a suitable regard to the education of their children. Their attention will be diverted from this most important concern, by their frequent animosities and trifling debates; & their minds will be too much unsettled & discomposed, to perform it, with any degree of pleasure or success. Or, if they should attempt to cultivate the dispositions & manners of their children, it is probable, that a spirit of contradiction, or a tenacious adherence to their own opinion, will lead them to pursue different & even contrary plans of education. The principles & maxims, which One inculcates, with all his might; the Other will, with equal zeal, censure & condemn. Those faults which One will excuse & overlook, the Other will think it necessary to punish. Thus authority will be opposed against authority, & influence against influence. The obvious consequence of which will be, that they must lose that filial respect & veneration which is the ground of filial obedience. Or, at least their children will learn, to consider One of

their parents as ruling them with Wisdom & Tenderness, & the Other, as treating them with unreasonable Severity--to look upon the One, as their Friend, & the Other, as their Enemy.---But, if this should not be the case--if we suppose them to agree in the instruction & discipline of their children; what will Precept avail, where it is continually contradicted by Example? How can they expect their children to love one another, & to cultivate benevolent & friendly affections, while they, themselves, are continually indulging contrary passions, and living together in strife & variance, enmity & hatred? The natural effect of such examples must be, that their tempers will be soured; their moral taste, vitiated; & their manners, corrupted.

Whereas, when those who are at the head of a family, are united in sincere affection, & live together in constant harmony, their children have an amiable pattern perpetually before their eyes, which cannot fail of attracting their esteem & love, & which will

probably form them to a similarity of disposition & manners. And, where this union of hearts subsists between parents, it strengthens their affection for their offspring, & prompts them to unite their utmost endeavours, for their improvement & welfare. They employ their joint skill & influence, in the important work of education; and, in consequence of this, their judgment is regarded with the highest deference---their advice is received with the greatest respect--their authority is doubly revered and they train up their children, in the way in which they should go, with ease and advantage.

Domestic peace is, likewise, an object most worthy of our serious attention, because it greatly contributes towards our improvement in virtue, & prepares us for appearing in the more public scenes of life. Every private family is a school of virtue or vice. Our dispositions and characters, are not formed in public, but in the retired walks of domestic life. If we here accustom

ourselves to indulge a resentful or peevish temper, we shall form a habit of anger or fretfulness which we shall carry with us into the world. On the contrary, if we exercise forbearance, meekness, & benevolence, in our daily intercourse with our relations & friends, we shall establish the most amiable affections in our hearts,--shall learn to look upon all mankind as our brethren--& shall be upright & honourable, kind & generous, in all our transactions with them.

Hence it is, that, when we see a man who behaves with propriety in domestic life, we immediately receive a bias in his favour, & are always disposed to employ him in our service, or make him our friend, much sooner than one of a contrary character.

Farther, to illustrate the subject under consideration, we may observe, that domestic peace is of the utmost importance to secure to us the pleasures of domestic life.--If you would be convinced of this, visit the dwelling of discord & strife, & observe the disposition, & behaviour of its inhabitants.

How doth every cross accident discompose their minds, & overspread their countenances with gloomy sullenness, or furious resentment! How doth the most trifling circumstances totally incapacitate them for the enjoyment of life! In vain are their tables covered with plenty, their habitations adorned with elegance & taste, & their persons clad in the richest attire. Their angry passions, like the jaundiced eye, discolour every object round them. They are as incapable of relishing the most luxurious entertainment, or of enjoying the most delightful scene, as the man whose appetite is taken away, & whose imagination is bewildered, by a raging fever. So true is the observation of Solomon: "Better is "a dinner of herbs, where love is, than "a stalled ox, & hatred therewith."

Wherefore is it, that we may so frequently observe those, who appear to be possessed of every thing, in their own families, which can afford them satisfaction & comfort, continually roving abroad, in search of hap-

pineſs--paſſing from one ſcene of amuſement and diſſipation to another--& never ſo diſcontented & reſtleſs, as when they are obliged to paſs a ſolitary hour, at home? It is, becauſe their own ungoverned paſſions, and fooliſh humours, or thoſe of the perſons with whom they are connected, will not permit them to enjoy the calm & heart-felt pleaſures of domeſtic life. For, to the man who is bleſt with tenderneſs & ſenſibility of heart, & who has been ſo fortunate as to form agreeable connections in life, his own habitation will always be the moſt welcome place, & his family will furniſh the trueſt & moſt laſting pleaſures. Go to the humble cottage, in which peace & love have fixed their abode, behold "how good & how pleaſant "it is for brethren, to dwell together in "unity." Obſerve, the unaffected chearfulneſs, which ſmiles in their countenances;--hear, in what artleſs language, they expreſs the content & joy of their hearts;--ſee, with what good-will, they perform a thouſand offices of civility & kindneſs to-

wards each other--with what satisfaction, they sit down together, to their plain but wholesome repast---with what unfeigned gratitude & joy, they unite to present their thanksgivings to the Father of the families of the whole earth, & how chearfully & affectionately they commend themselves & each other, to the care & blessing of Heaven! Dwell, for a while, in this happy family, & learn the inestimable value & excellence of domestic peace & love.---Where hearts are thus united by the firmest & most pleasing of all bands, Mutual Affection, & where this affection is manifested in a constant series of kind offices, there, indeed, is the seat of content & happiness;--there will that solid satisfaction be found, which is, in vain, sought for in the crouded and noisy scenes of business & amusement.* The man, who can command the serene and silent pleasures of domestic life, may leave to the sons of ambition & vanity, to the slaves of intemperance & debauchery, and to the dupes of state & fashion, their imaginary

delights; & may say with the full consent of his heart, "I have enough."

But, bright as this scene is, we must not expect to find it entirely free from clouds. Whatever degree of content & happiness we may possess, in our own minds, or in our families, at home, we cannot hope to be without our share of affliction, from external causes. "Man is born to trouble, as "the sparks fly upward:" And why should we flatter ourselves, that we shall be exempted from the common lot of humanity? Our present tranquility & ease will probably be interrupted by sickness, by losses or disappointments, or by some other calamities. Or, however, "it is appointed unto us all "once to die;" & though we should enjoy an uninterrupted course of domestic peace & happiness, to the end of our days, the painful moment of separation must arrive, when "we shall go down to the grave, & the eye "which hath seen us, shall see us no more."

Now, under the afflictions of life, & in the immediate prospect of death, judge ye,

whether true satisfaction & comfort are to be found in the families, where peace & love have been strangers, or in those, in which they have taken up their constant residence? --Those who have lived together in a state of variance, & have no inward consciousness of harmonious & well-regulated affections--no pleasing recollection of a peaceful & happy life,--no testimonies of the esteem & love of their friends, to support & comfort them in their last moments. But, those who have spent their days, in the continual exercise of benevolent affections, & in the daily performance of reciprocal offices of kindness, may, at this season, derive unspeakable satisfaction from the remembrance of past life; may, with composure & chearfulness, resign each other into the hands of that Being, who hath been the guide of their youth & the support of their age; & may posses an humble hope of meeting again, & dwelling for ever, in the regions of eternal felicity.

X Such are the arguments, by which domestic peace & harmony may be recom-

mended. It is necessary to the regular discharge of the relative duties;--it is of the utmost consequence with regard to the education of children;--it greatly contributes to our improvement in virtue; prepares us for the more public scenes of life; &, finally, is attended with the highest satisfaction & pleasure. What advice then can be more worthy of the serious regard of all those who are united in the relations of domestic life, than that of the text, "see that ye fall not out by the way?"

If you be desirous of following this advice, & of enjoying all the pleasures & advantages of domestic peace--be careful not to suffer your anger to be inflamed by trifling incidents. It frequently happens, that circumstances of the most trivial nature occasion dissentions in families, & produce the most serious and fatal consequences. To prevent this, always maintain a high sense of the importance of family peace, & esteem it as a precious jewel, in comparison with which most other things are trifles.--Accustom yourselves to submit to the opinions, & comply with the humours

...bers, in matters of little consequence, even when they are contrary to your own inclination or judgment. Cultivate mutual affection, and esteem, by daily performing, towards each other, all the kind offices in your power. This is the most important & comprehensive rule for the preservation of domestic peace; for if you love one another sincerely, you will be little disposed to "fall out be the way." The observation, which the Apostle Paul makes, concerning love in general, may be justly applied to that affection which ought to subsist between the members of the same family: "Love is the fulfilling of the law. "See then that ye love one another with "pure hearts, fervently."

And may the God of love and peace be with you: Amen.

Enfield.

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